

GV  
1215  
G63  
1894  
V.1



CHILDREN'S

SINGING

GAMES

PUBLISHED IN

1894

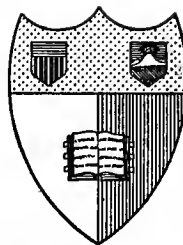
DAVID

BY

NUTT & IN THE STRAND  
AND MACMILLAN AND CO. NEW YORK



67  
1215  
G63  
1894  
v.1



**Cornell University Library**  
**Ithaca, New York**

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME OF THE  
**SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND**

THE GIFT OF  
**HENRY W. SAGE**

1891

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
JAN 24 1943

APR 7 1943

AUG 21 1943

JAN 24 1945

NOV 27 1948 J

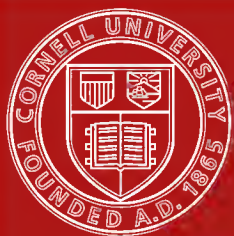
DEC 4 1948 C

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 1924 100 672 330



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924100672330>

# CHILDREN'S SINGING GAMES





# CHILDREN'S SINGING GAMES

With the tunes to which they are sung نغمات



COLLECTED & EDITED

BY

ALICE B GOMME



PICTURED IN BLACK & WHITE

BY

WINIFRED SMITH

DAVID NUTT IN THE STRAND

LONDON

MACMILLAN & CO NEW YORK



~~405~~  
~~F34~~

A494059



*To*

**MY BOYS**

**IN MEMORY OF THE HAPPY DAYS**

**WHEN WE PLAYED TOGETHER**





# Singing Games

## CONTENTS

When I was a Young Girl	<i>Page</i> 14
Jenny Jones	22
Green Gravel	28
Milking Pails	32
Here Comes Three Dukes a-Riding	42
Old Roger	48
We are the Rovers	52
Poor Mary Sits a-Weeping	58



# Children's Singing Games

## PREFACE



AT a time when the amusement of children is more than ever considered to be an essential part of their up-bringing, it seems opportune to again introduce to those who do not know them otherwise, the traditional games preserved by generations of children. At almost every school where the delightful Kindergarten system is in vogue, the summer or winter concert generally includes one or more games. But good as these games are, they after all bear the stamp of their origin as one of the means for instruction. There is an absence of the wild unconsciousness of the traditional game and any one who watches, as I have done, such a game as, "Jenny Jones" played without the superintendence of any teacher or grown-up person, by the little children gambolling on the village greens out of school hours, or even in the murky and sunless courts of London, will at once recognise that there is a power in these games to fascinate and hold the minds of the players in a way that is almost unexplainable by description, and not to be obtained by the modern invented game. The pathos, the fun, and the "go" which



# Children's Singing Games

## PREFACE

accompany every action of children while playing their own games, are unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

When one considers the conditions under which child-life exists in the courts of London (with which I am most acquainted), and of other great cities, it is almost impossible to estimate too highly the influence which these games have for good on town-bred populations. Of course, no mention is made of them in official statistics; but I for one feel certain that no real criminal emanates from that large class of dirty, but withal healthy-looking, London children who play "When I was a Young Girl," and "Poor Mary sits a-Weeping," as if their very lives depended on the vigour and fervour they put into their movements. To those of my readers who are interested in London life or in the evolution of town life generally, I can promise considerable enjoyment by a visit to some of the slums and courts where these games are going on; and our reformers may learn a lesson from them, and perhaps see a way out of the dismal forebodings of what is to happen when the bulk of our population have deserted the country for the towns.

That it is possible to reduce the inequalities always perceptible on the village green, and still more so in the streets, and to arrive at good singing and good acting without losing one bit of the frolic and characteristic "go," was proved when in 1891 I presented, for the amusement of a

# Singing Games

## PREFACE

grown-up audience of Folkloreists from all parts of the world, some specimens of children's games from the village green of Barnes. For I am assured by the universal approbation which these items on the programme of the *Conversazione* at Mercers' Hall received, that these games, if faithfully reproduced from the traditional versions, are capable of giving great enjoyment to children who, alas! have not learnt them in the traditional method. It is one of the misfortunes of present-day society that our children lose the influences derived from the natural playing of games; but in every direction attention is being given in all classes to the necessities of recreation, and these games afford one of the most pleasant means of supplying that necessity.

There is one other aspect of these games which cannot but interest those who like to think and believe that their lives are linked indissolubly with the generations who have preceded us. Children are always mimics, or rather unconscious dramatists of the real events of life; and the action and words of some of these games are so divergent from present-day life, that we must look to the events of earlier periods for an explanation of them. It is impossible that they can have been invented by children by the mere effort of imagination, and there is ample evidence that they have but carried on unchangingly a record of events, some of which



# Children's Singing Games

## PREFACE

belong to the earliest days of the nation. In the Notes, I have indicated where early customs appear to have been enshrined in these games; and without devoting several pages to prove these suggestions, I trust they may be sufficiently evident to interest those of my readers who will care more for the games when they know that they are genuine records of the past, than if they were merely presented as collections of the present day. This is not the place to do more than state that children's games form a section of folklore—those traditions, that is to say, which are now being carefully studied as important contributions to the past history of the nation.

This little book, then, goes forth to my little readers as a message of happiness and fun from children who have played the games it contains perhaps for centuries of time; and it goes forth to those who will use it to teach the games as a memorial of children's days, which few of us can altogether afford to forget.

The tunes have been harmonised by my sister, Mrs. F. Adam.

ALICE B. GOMME.

BARNES COMMON,  
*March 1894.*

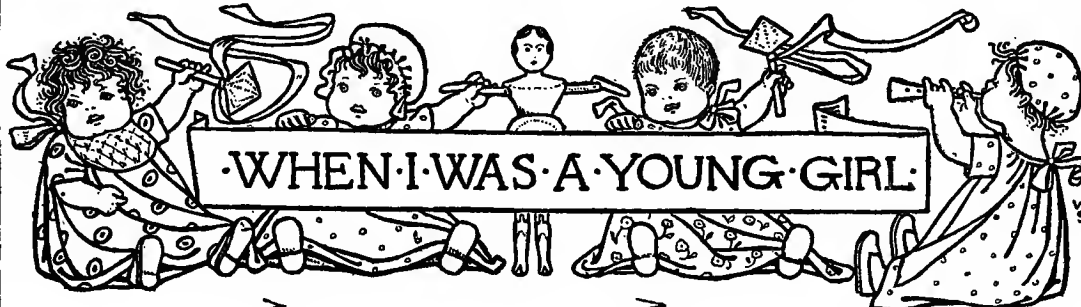




WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL.



When I had a sweetheart. Oh this way went I.



When I was a young girl a young girl a young girl when

I was a young girl how happy was I, and this way and that way and

this way and that way and this way and that way oh this way went I.

*rall*



## WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL



When I was a schoolgirl, a schoolgirl, a schoolgirl. ~ ~ ~  
 When I was a schoolgirl, oh this way went I. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
 And this way and that way and this way and that way ~ ~  
 When I was a schoolgirl, oh this way went I. ~ ~ ~ ~





# WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL CONTD



When I was a teacher, a teacher, a teacher,  
 When I was a teacher, oh this way went I.  
 And this way & that way & this way & that way  
 When I was a teacher, oh this way went I.

When I had a sweetheart, a sweetheart, a sweetheart  
 When I had a sweetheart, oh this way went I.  
 And this way & that way & this way & that way  
 When I had a sweetheart, oh this way went I.

When I had a husband, a husband, a husband  
 When I had a husband, oh this way went I.  
 And this way & that way & this way & that way  
 When I had a husband, oh this way went I.



When I had a baby, ---  
 When I had a baby ---  
 And this way & that way ---  
 When I had a baby ---



--- a baby, a baby,  
 --- oh this way went I.  
 --- and this way & that way  
 --- oh this way went I.

When I had a donkey, ---  
 When I had a donkey ---  
 And this way & that way ---  
 When I had a donkey ---

--- a donkey, a donkey,  
 --- oh this way went I.  
 --- and this way & that way  
 --- oh this way went I.



When I took in washing



When I was  
a young  
girl  
Continued

When I took in washing, oh washing, oh washing,

When I took in washing, oh this way went I.

And this way & that way & this way & that way

When I took in washing, oh this way went I.

When my baby died, oh died, oh died,

When my baby died, how sorry was I.

And this way & that way & this way & that way

When my baby died, oh this way went I.

When my husband died, oh died, oh died,

When my husband died, how sorry was I.

And this way & that way & this way & that way

When my husband died, oh this way went I.



Wh-  
-en  
my  
ba-  
-by  
di-  
-ed

# Children's Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL

*Any Number of Children may Play*



THE players join hands and form a ring. They all dance or walk round, singing the words and keeping the ring form until the end of the second line of each verse. They then unclasp hands, stand still, and (in the first verse) each child takes hold of her dress with her hands and dances a step to the left and another to the right, two or three times, singing the other two lines of the verse, and at the words "this way went I," turns herself right round in a pirouette, finishing with her face to the centre of the ring. The children then all join hands again, and sing the two *first* lines of the second verse, then again stop, unclasp their hands, walk round singly, and suit their actions to the words they have just sung. This is continued throughout the game.



# Children's Singing Games

## WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL

The different actions are : *Dancing* for the first verse, as described above ; *Holding both hands together* to form a book for "school-girls," and walking slowly round as if learning lessons or reading ; *Hearing lessons*, and pretending to "rap hands with the cane" when acting Teacher ; *Kissing hands*, or "throwing a kiss" while walking round, for "when I had a sweetheart" ; *Walking round in couples*, arm-in-arm, for "when I had a husband" ; Pretending to *nurse and hush a baby* in the sixth verse ; Pretending to *drive a donkey*, by taking hold of each other's skirts and using an imaginary whip in the seventh ; Pretending to *wash and wring clothes* in the eighth ; *Putting handkerchiefs to their eyes* and pretending to cry in the ninth ; sitting on the ground, putting handkerchiefs or pinafores over the face and head, and rocking themselves backwards and forwards, as if in the deepest grief, for the last verse ; Always joining hands and walking round in a circle when singing the two first lines of each verse.



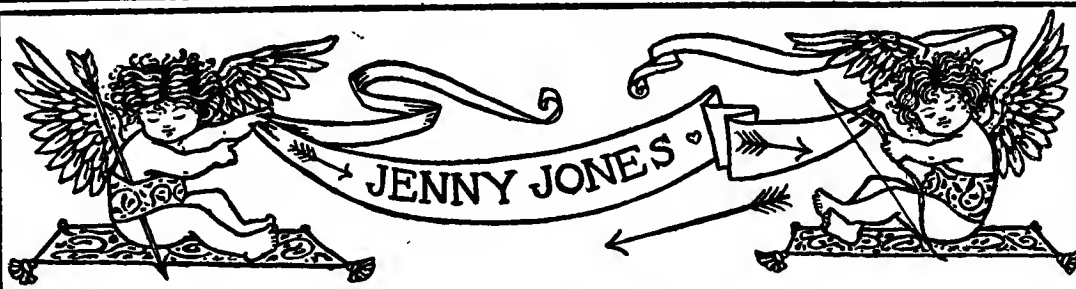


WE'VE COME TO SEE POOR JENNY JONES.



Oh! Jenny is washing, washing, washing;  
Oh! Jenny is washing  
You can't see her now.





The first line of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The bottom staff is a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is written on the treble staff, and the accompaniment is written on the bass staff. The lyrics "We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones. We've" are written below the treble staff.

The second line of musical notation also consists of two staves, similar to the first line. The melody and accompaniment continue. The lyrics "come to see poor Jenny Jones how is she now?" are written below the treble staff.



Oh! Jenny is washing, you can't

see her now.



# JENNY JONES



## MOTHER

Oh! Jenny is washing, washing, washing,  
Oh! Jenny is washing, you cant see her now.

## SUITORS

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, <sup>Jenny Jones.</sup> Jenny Jones,  
We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, how is she  
now?

## MOTHER

Oh! Jenny is starching, starching, starching,  
Oh! Jenny is starching, you cant see her now.

## SUITORS

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, <sup>Jenny Jones.</sup> Jenny Jones,  
We've come to see poor Jenny Jones how is she  
now?





## JENNY JONES CON TD

### MOTHER

Oh! Jenny is ironing, ironing, ironing,  
Oh! Jenny is ironing, you cant see her now.

### SUITORS

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,  
We've come to see poor Jenny Jones & how is she now?

### MOTHER

Poor Jenny is ill, is ill, is ill,  
Poor Jenny is ill, you cant see her now.

### SUITORS

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,  
We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, & how is she now?

### MOTHER

Poor Jenny is dying, is dying, is dying,  
Poor Jenny is dying, you cant see her now.

### SUITORS

We've come to see poor Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,  
We've come to see poor Jenny Jones & how is she now?

### MOTHER

Poor Jenny is dead, dead, dead,  
Poor Jenny is dead, you cant see her now.

### ALL

There's red for the Soldiers & blue for the sailors,  
And black for the mourners of poor Jenny Jones.



# Children's Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## JENNY JONES

*Several Children can Play at this Game. A small Number is as well, or better, than a larger*



TWO children stand on one side; one personates the Mother, who stands still and holds out the skirts of her dress with both hands; the other personates Jenny Jones, and kneels or stoops down in a crouching attitude behind her companion's extended dress. The other players form a line by joining hands. They sing the first, third, and every alternate verse, advancing and retiring in line while doing so. The Mother sings the answers to their questions (second, fourth, and alternate verses), standing still and hiding Jenny Jones all the time from view. When all the verses but the last one are sung, Jenny lies down as if dead, the Mother stands aside, and two

# Singing Games

## JENNY JONES

of the other players then take up Jenny Jones, one by the shoulders and the other by the feet, and carry her a little distance off, where they lay her on the ground. They then straighten her dress, place her arms by her sides, or across her breast, she lying still and closing her eyes. All the players follow, generally two by two, with their handkerchiefs at their eyes and their heads lowered, as if in grief. Then they form a circle, join hands, and stand round the prostrate Jenny Jones, the Mother at her head, and then sing with their heads lowered, and in slow, mournful tones, the last verse. The game then begins again, with two other children as Mother and Jenny Jones, the former two joining the line.



**GREEN GRAVEL**

*slowly*

Green gravel green gravel your grass is so green. The fairest young  
 damsel that ev-er was seen. I'll wash you in new milk and dress you in  
 silk, and write down your name with a gold pen and ink. Oh



(Ma-ry) Oh (Ma-ry) your true love is dead He's

sent you a let-ter to turn round your head.



GREEN GRAVEL



Green gravel, green gravel, your grass is so green.

# Children's Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## GREEN GRAVEL

*Any Number of Children may Play*



THE children join hands and form a ring. They all walk round, keeping the ring form, and sing the words. When singing the fifth line, one of the children is "named" by the others, and at the end of the sixth line this child "turns her head" by turning round and *facing* the *outside* of the circle or ring, and having her *back* to the *inside*. She joins hands again with the other players, and the ring walks round singing the words again, another child being named and turning her face to the *outside* of the circle. This is continued until all the children face *outwards*, holding hands and walking round. In some places the game ends here ; in others, it is continued until all the players have again reversed their positions and face the *inside* of the ring or circle, as at first.



# MILKING PAILS



Buy me a pair of new milk-  
ing pails  
Gentle  
sweet mother o' mine.



MILKING PAILS

Mary's gone a milk...ing mo...ther mo....ther.

Mary's gone a milk...ing Gentle sweet mother o' mine.



# MILKING PAILS



ake your pails and go after her  
daughter, daughter.  
Take your pails and go after her  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.



uy me a pair of new milking pails  
mother, mother.  
Buy me a pair of new milking pails  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.



here's the money to come from  
daughter, daughter.  
Where's the money to come from  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.





M  
o  
t  
h  
e  
r



D  
a  
u  
g  
h  
t  
e  
r

Sell my father's feather bed  
mother, mother.  
Sell my father's feather bed  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.


What's your father to sleep in  
daughter, daughter.  
What's your father to sleep in  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.





Put him in the children's bed  
mother, mother.  
Put him in the children's bed  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.





Where shall the children <sup>sleep</sup> go to  
 daughter, daughter. <sup>sleep</sup>  
 Where shall the children go to  
 Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.

Put them in the pig sty   
 mother, mother.  
 Put them in the pig sty  
 Gentle sweet mother o'mine.



What shall the pigs lay in   
 daughter, daughter.  
 What shall the pigs lay in   
 Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.

Put them in the washing tub   
 mother, mother  
 Put them in the washing tub   
 Gentle sweet mother o'mine.



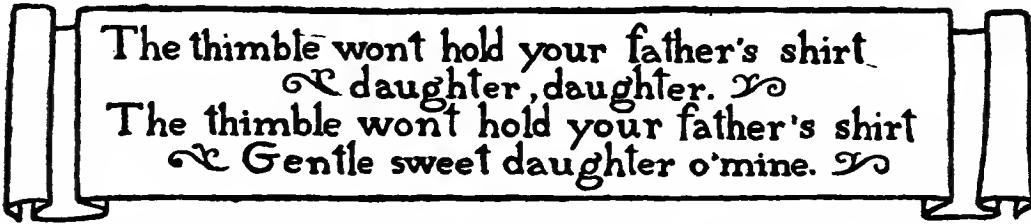


MILKING PAILS  
CONTINUED



What am I to wash in  
daughter, daughter.  
What am I to wash in  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.

Wash in your thimble  
mother, mother.  
Wash in your thimble  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.



The thimble wont hold your father's shirt  
& daughter, daughter. &  
The thimble wont hold your father's shirt  
& Gentle sweet daughter o'mine. &

Wash in the river  
mother, mother.

Wash in the river

CONTINUED

Gentle sweet  
mother

o' mine.

MILKING PAILS



Suppose the clothes should blow away  
daughter, daughter..  
Suppose the clothes should blow away  
Gentle sweet daughter o' mine.



W.S

WASH IN THE  
RIVER  
MOTHER



# MILKING PAILS ㄣㄣㄣㄣ

ㄣㄣㄣㄣ CONCLUDED

Set a man to watch them  
mother, mother.

Set a man to watch them  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.

Suppose the man should go to sleep  
daughter, daughter.

Suppose the man should go to sleep  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.

Take a boat and go after them  
mother, mother.

Take a boat and go after them  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.

Suppose the boat should be upset  
daughter, daughter.

Suppose the boat should be upset  
Gentle sweet daughter o'mine.

Then there would be an end of you  
mother, mother.

Then there would be an end of you  
Gentle sweet mother o'mine.



# Children's Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## MILKING PAILS

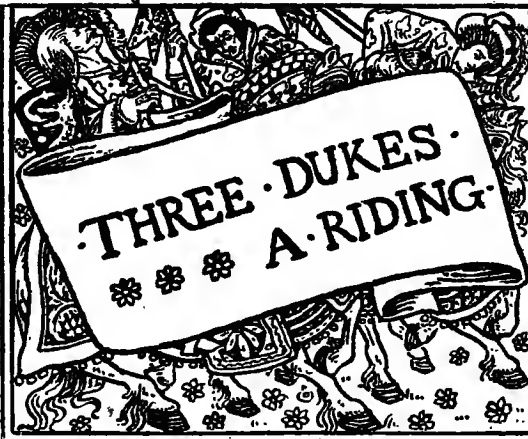
*Any Number of Children may Play*



ONE child stands apart from the rest and personates the Mother. She usually carries a stick. The other children form a line, holding hands and facing the Mother. They advance and retire, singing the first and every alternate verse, while the Mother stands still; then the Mother, advancing and retiring, in response sings the second and alternate verses, while the line stands still. While the last verse is being sung, the line of children all run off in different directions; the Mother runs after them, catches and beats them. The first or last one caught usually becomes Mother in the next set, the game continuing until all have personated the Mother.



Here come three Dukes a  
ri...ding a ri...ding a



ri...ding here come three Dukes a ri...ding with a rancy tancy tay.

What is your good will Sirs,  
Will Sirs, will Sirs,  
What is your good will Sirs?  
With a rancy tancy tay!

Our good will is to marry,  
To marry, to marry,  
Our good will is to marry  
With a rancy tancy tay!



Marry one of us Sirs,  
Us Sirs, us Sirs,  
Marry one of us Sirs  
With a rancy tancy tay!

You're all too black & dirty  
Dirty, dirty,  
You're all too black & dirty  
With a rancy tancy tay!



VS



Last verse only

Thro' the kitchen & thro' the hall I choose the fairest of you all, the  
 fair-est one that I can see is pretty Miss..... walk with me.

We're good enough for you Sirs  
 You Sirs, you Sirs,  
 We're good enough for you Sirs  
 With a rancy tancy lay!

You're all as stiff as pokers,  
 Pokers, pokers,  
 You're all as stiff as pokers  
 With a rancy tancy lay!

We can bend as well as you Sirs  
 You Sirs, you Sirs,  
 We can bend as well as you Sirs  
 With a rancy tancy lay!



HERE · COME · THREE · DUKES · A · RIDING ·



Marry · one · of · us · Sirs ·  
Us · Sirs · Us · Sirs ·



Marry · one · of · us · Sirs ·  
With · a · rancy · tancy · tay ·



# Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## THREE DUKES A-RIDING

*Any Number of Children may Play*



THE players are divided into dukes and maidens. Three children (boys preferably) represent the dukes. They join hands and form a line on one side; the other players join hands and form a line, standing opposite to and facing the dukes.

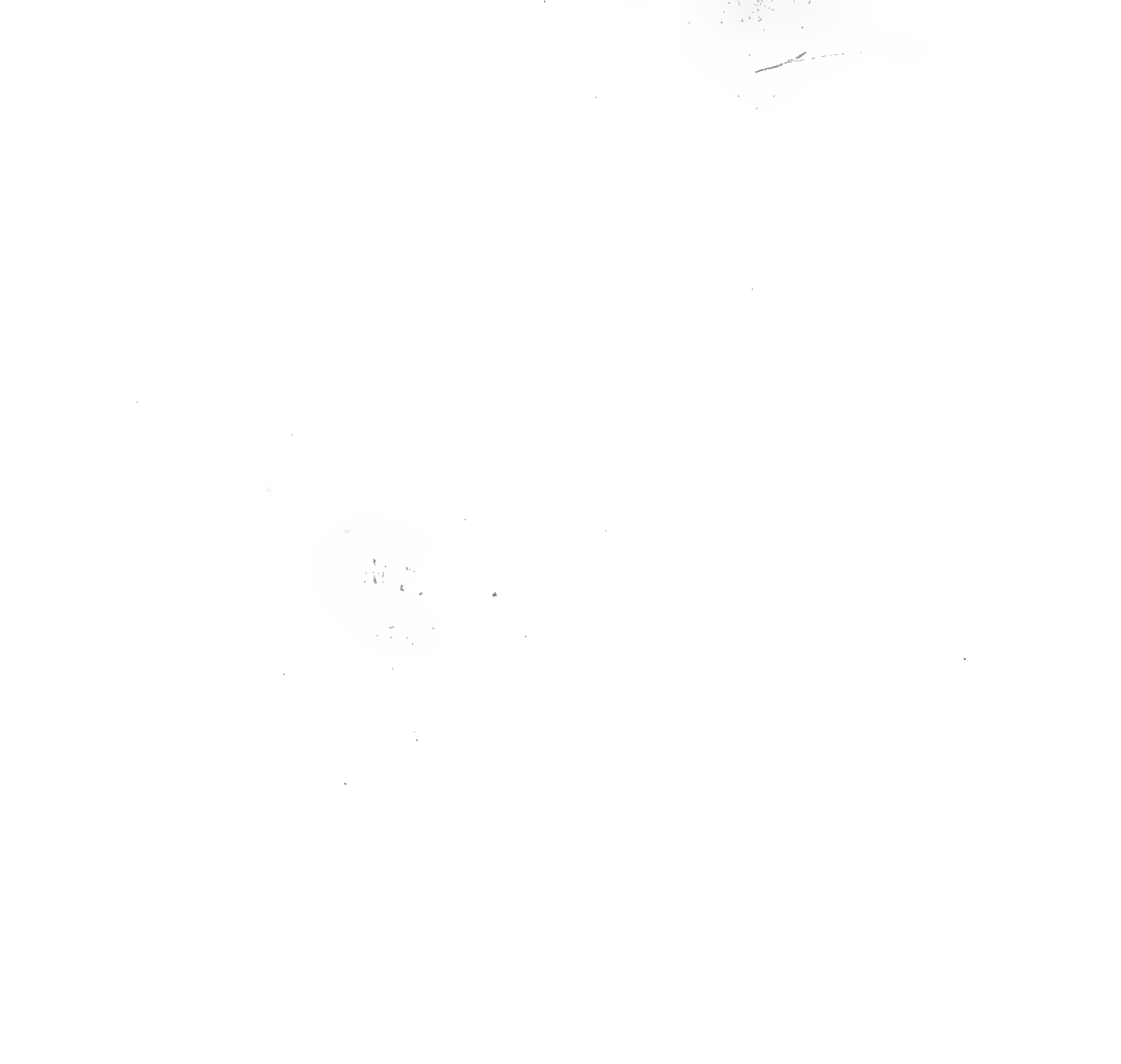
Each line advances and retires alternately while singing their respective verses. The three dukes sing the first verse, advancing and retiring in line. The maidens then advance and retire, singing the second verse, the dukes standing still. The dukes sing the third verse and the maidens answer with the fourth. The dukes then sing the fifth verse, looking critically or contemptuously at the girls as they do so. The maidens when singing the sixth verse draw themselves



# Children's Singing Games

## THREE DUKES A-RIDING


up, hold their heads as proudly as they can, and look offended. The dukes retort in the same manner as before, when finging the seventh verse. At the word "bend," in the eighth verse, the maidens all *bow* down their heads and bend their bodies as gracefully as they can, holding themselves erect afterwards. The dukes when finging the last verse, name the girl whom they choofe. At the end of this verse, the girl named walks over to them and joins the line of dukes. The game is continued by the dukes finging the first verse again, faying : "Here come *four* dukes a-riding." The verses are sung over and over again, until all the maidens are ranged on the dukes' side, they adding one to their number every time.








OLD ROGER...




They planted an apple tree over his head  
H'm! ha! over his head. 

The apples were ripe and ready to drop  
H'm! ha! ready to drop. 

There came an old woman a picking them up  
H'm! ha! picking them up. 

Old Roger jumped up and gave her a knock  
H'm! ha! gave her a knock. 

Which made that old woman go hippity hop  
H'm! ha! hippity hop. 

w.s

# OLD ROGER

Old Roger is dead and gone to his grave

H'm! ha! gone to his grave.

The musical score consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The first system contains the lyrics 'Old Roger is dead and gone to his grave'. The second system contains the lyrics 'H'm! ha! gone to his grave.' The music is written in a simple, folk-like style with a key signature of one flat and a 6/8 time signature.



# Children's Singing Games

## DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

### OLD ROGER

*Any Number of Children can Play this Game*



ONE child, who represents Old Roger, lies down on the ground, either having his face and head covered with a handkerchief, or a cloak or apron is thrown all over him, completely covering his body. Two other children stand apart, and the rest of the players stand round the dead Old Roger in a circle, and only they sing the words. These children stand still throughout the game, crossing their arms over their breasts, bending their heads and swaying their bodies backwards and forwards in a mourning attitude, while they sing the first verse. At the commencement of the second verse, one of the two children who are standing apart goes into the circle and stands beside Old Roger's head, to represent the apple tree.

# Children's Singing Games

## OLD ROGER

During the singing of the third verse, this child raises his arms above his shoulders and drops them again, to show the falling apples. At the commencement of the fourth verse, the other outside child goes into the circle to represent the old woman, and pretends to pick up the fallen fruit. Then, at the beginning of the next verse, Old Roger jumps up and beats the Old Woman out of the ring, who goes off during the singing of the last verse, hobbling on one foot as if crippled and hurt. The game then begins again, with three other children as the actors, the previous three joining the circle. There is no interval between the verses.



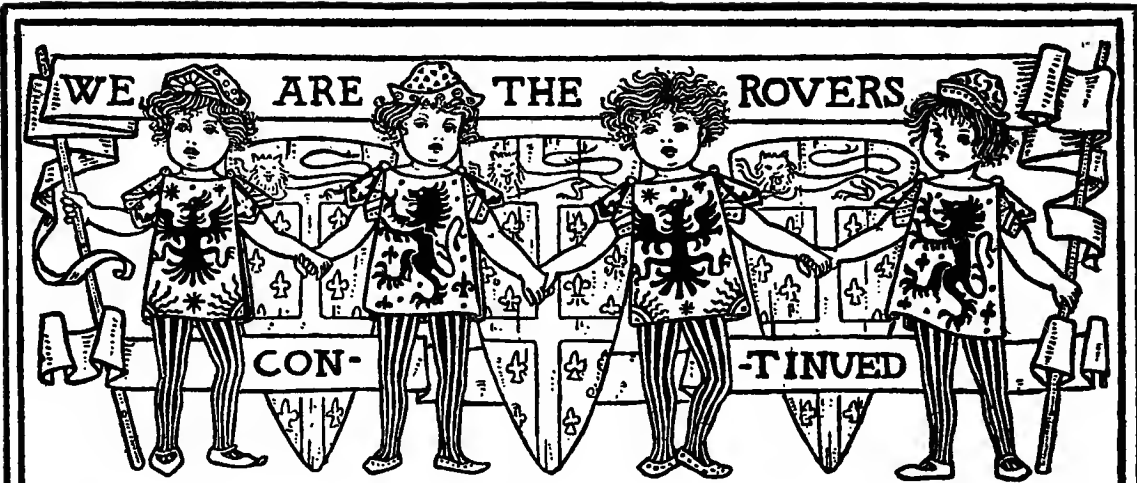
WE · ARE · THE · ROVERS



We are coming to take your land







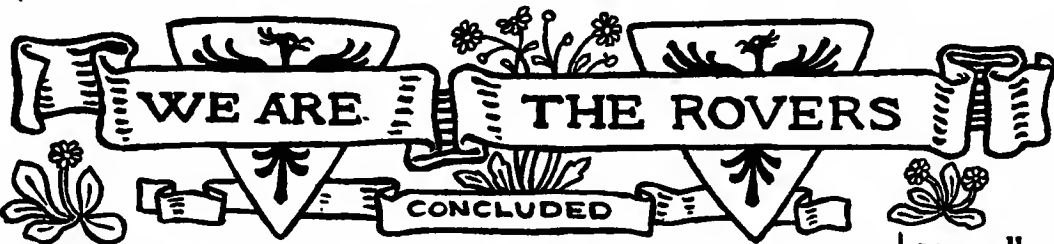
We dont care for your men <sup>you</sup> nor  
 Though you're the Rovers  
 We dont care for your men <sup>you</sup> nor  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers.

We will send our dogs to bite  
 We are the Rovers  
 We will send our dogs to bite  
 Though you're the Guardian Soldiers.



We dont care for your dogs <sup>you</sup> nor  
 Though you're the Rovers  
 We dont care for your dogs <sup>you</sup> nor  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers.

Will you have a glass of wine  
 We are the Rovers  
 Will you have a glass of wine  
 For respect of Guardian Soldiers.



A glass of wine wont serve us all  
 Though you're the Rovers,  
 A glass of wine wont serve us all  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers.

A barrel of beer wont serve us all  
 Though you're the Rovers,  
 A barrel of beer wont serve us all  
 For we're gallant Guardian Soldiers.

We don't fear your blue-coat men  
 Though you're the Rovers,  
 We don't fear your blue-coat men  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers.

We don't mind your red-coat men  
 Though you're the Rovers,  
 We don't mind your red-coat men  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers

Will a barrel of beer then serve <sup>you all</sup>  
 We are the Rovers, <sup>you all</sup>  
 Will a barrel of beer then serve  
 As you're the Guardian Soldiers.

We will send our blue coat men  
 We are the Rovers,  
 We will send our blue coat men  
 Though you're the Guardian Soldiers

We will send our red-coat men  
 We are the Rovers,  
 We will send our red-coat men  
 Though you're the Guardian Soldiers.

Are you ready for a fight  
 We are the Rovers,  
 Are you ready for a fight  
 Though you're the Guardian Soldiers



Yes! we're ready for a fight  
 Though you're the Rovers  
 Yes! we're ready for a fight  
 For we're the Guardian Soldiers  
 Present! Shoot! Bang! Fire.



# Children's Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## WE ARE THE ROVERS

*Any Number of Children may Play, a large Number  
being an Advantage*



THE players divide into two sides of about equal numbers and strength. One side represents the Rovers, the other the Guardian Soldiers, or Roman and English Soldiers. They form in two lines. The Rovers advance and retire in line, singing the first, third, and alternate verses, the Guardian Soldiers standing still. Then the latter advance and retire in line, singing the second, fourth, and alternate verses, the Rovers standing still in their turn. When singing the last verse, both sides prepare to fight. They all roll up their sleeves and pretend to present arms or draw swords. When the last verse has been sung, they call out, "Present! Shoot! Bang! Fire!" and the game ends with a pretended fight or battle; or the Rovers try to catch the Guardian Soldiers, who, when caught, must stand apart as prisoners.

.

**G**

POOR MARY SITS A WEEPING

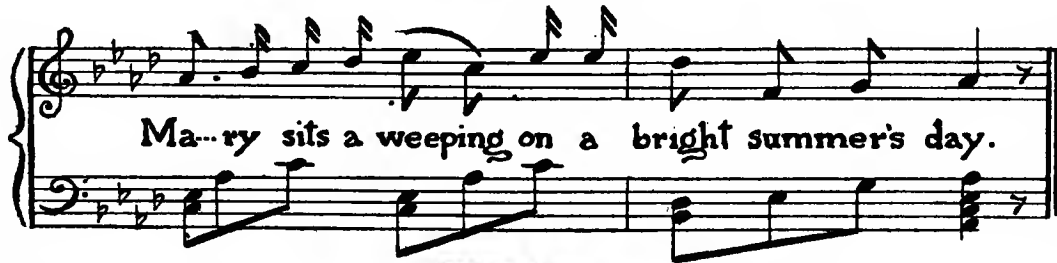


Pray Mary what are  
you weeping for?

I'm weeping for a  
sweetheart

Pray Mary choose  
your lover

# POOR MARY SIT'S A WEEPING



Pray Mary what are you weeping for  
A weeping for, a weeping for,  
Pray Mary what are you weeping for  
On a bright summers day

I'm weeping for a sweetheart  
A sweetheart, a sweetheart  
I'm weeping for a sweetheart  
On a bright summer's day.

Pray Mary choose your lover  
Your lover, your lover,  
Pray Mary choose your lover  
On a bright summers day.





Now you're married I wish you joy first a girl & then a boy

Seven years after son & daughter Pray young couple come

kiss together kiss her once kiss her twice kiss her three times over.



# Singing Games

DIRECTIONS FOR PLAYING

## POOR MARY SITS A WEEPING

*Any Number of Children can Play*



RING is formed by all the players except one joining hands. The odd player kneels down on the ground in the centre of the ring, covering her face with her hands. The ring of children dance round her finging the first two verses. The kneeling child then takes her hands from her face and sings the third verse alone, still kneeling, while the ring dances round. The ring of children then sing the fourth verse, still dancing round. While they are finging this, the kneeling child rises and chooses any child she pleases from the ring, who goes into the centre with her. These two both stand or dance round together, holding hands while the ring sing the marriage formula, and they kiss each other at the command. The ring dances round much more quickly during the finging of this last verse. The child who was "Poor Mary" then joins the ring and the child who had been chosen by her kneels down, and the game begins again.





# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

### WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL

THIS game was collected in Barnes and is a very popular one. It is practically the same as another from Platt, Wrotham, which was collected for me by Miss Burne. All the different versions will be found in vol. ii. of my *Traditional Games*. This game evidently owes its origin to the fact that children observe and imitate the practices of their elders. Miss Burne calls this game the "life of a woman," but it is the life of men and women too. Imitation of boys' and men's customs is shown by some versions where the game is played by boys as well as girls, and where the actions imitated are those of men's outdoor life—farming, mowing, and occupations such as carpenter, shoemaker, soldier, sailor. It is curious that courtship, marriage, and death are absent from some versions, while others again combine both. In most of the versions played by girls this game shows observation of those events which have the most important influence on a girl's or woman's life—dancing, courtship, marriage, births and death of children, and widowhood. That this game has not stopped its natural growth but represents present-day feeling, is, I think, shown by the fact that in several versions the death of the husband is not considered the greatest misfortune that could befall a wife. "When my husband died how happy was I," is the version given by our Barnes children, (it is thought advisable in this book to give the orthodox termination);



# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

to this waving of handkerchiefs as a signal of rejoicing and a final "Hurrah!" ends the game. Many women grieve more for the loss of a baby than the loss of a husband; the woman has, during her husband's lifetime, in so many cases to provide for herself and children, the man's money (when a small amount only is earned) is spent principally on himself; the death of the husband in cases of drunkenness, too, considerably simplifies matters.

Now, too, that boys' and girls' schools are in separate buildings the playing together of boys and girls is practically at an end, and the boys' part of this game is dying out, while the girls alter their employments or occupations to suit their surroundings, learning lessons and teaching taking the place of more domestic employments.

## JENNY JONES

THIS version was collected by Miss Burne from Platt, Wrotham, and was one of the games given at the Folklore Congress Conversazione. Many different versions are given in my *Traditional Games*, vol. i. pp. 260-277, as well as a detailed account of the methods of playing in different places, and the relative importance of these. The game as presented in this version, and as generally played, shows only a dramatic rendering of a funeral of earlier times, but there is evidence in some of the versions to show that the game was formerly one of courting, ending in the death and burial of one of the lovers, and I suggest its origin from the early village custom of a band of suitors wooing the girls of a village. Many

# Singing Games

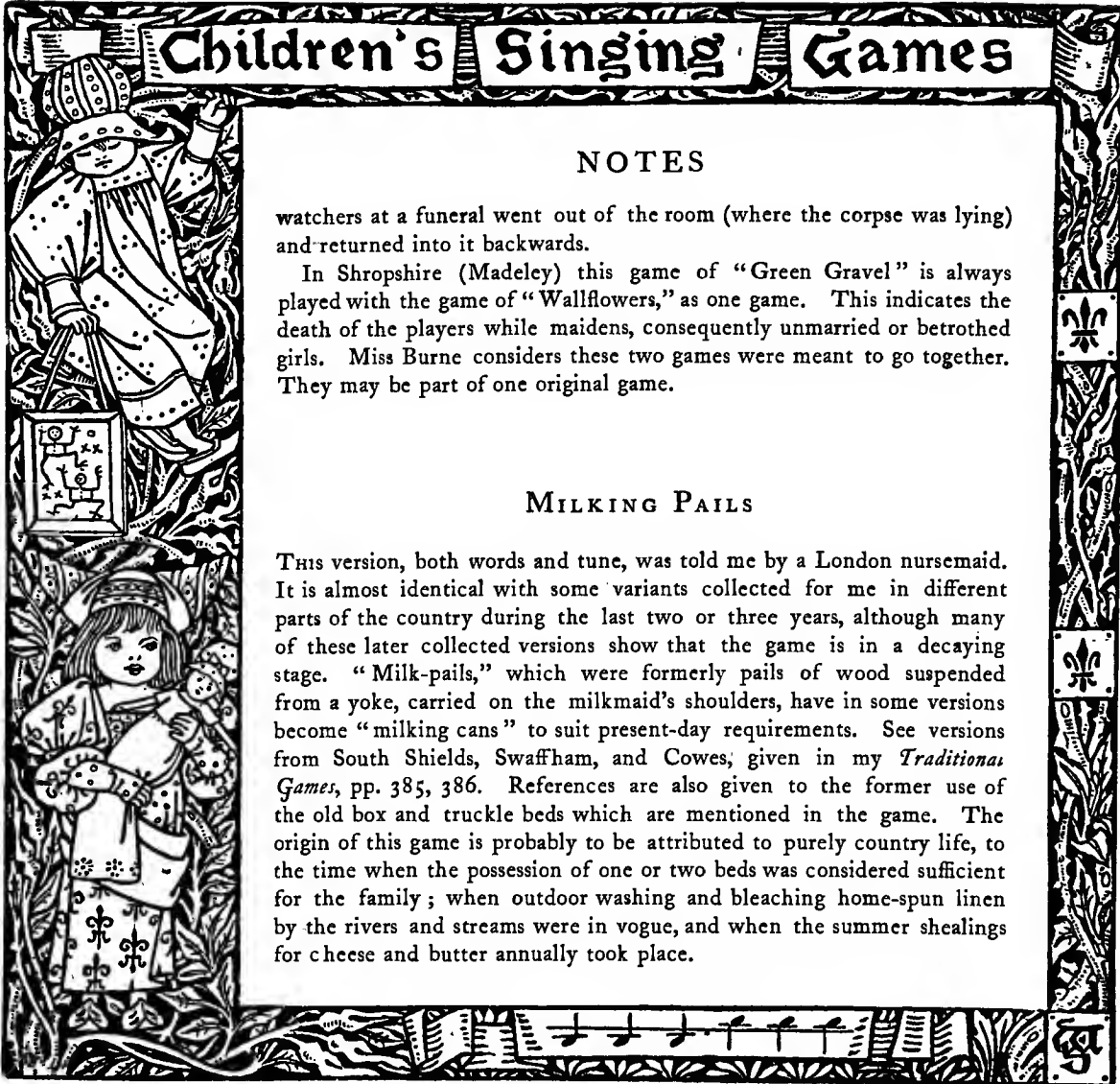
## NOTES

versions show that the colour selected is the one to dress the corpse in. The dressing of the corpse of a maiden in white, and the carrying it to the grave by girl companions, is a well-known village custom, and was practised in some parts until a not very recent period. In some versions, too, an important incident, that of "ghost," or spirit of the dead, occurs. The dead Jenny, after the burial is accomplished, springs up and pursues the mourners, who scatter in all directions, calling out, "The ghost! the ghost!" This rising of the dead lover is another illustration of the old belief that spirits of the unquiet dead rise from their graves, haunt churchyards and places of their former abodes.

## GREEN GRAVEL

THIS game was collected (words and tune) from Barnes children. This game, the version of which given in this book is the one most prevalent, is described in my *Traditional Games*, vol. i. pp. 170-183, rather fully, and an analysis of the incidents from all variants is also given, the result of which shows the game to have been originally connected with funeral ceremonies. Green Gravel is probably "green grave," and the incidents of washing and dressing the corpse and writing an inscription, important functions as these were in earlier times, are all indicated, as well as the belief of communion with the dead. In many versions, love and marriage verses occur. These may or may not be later interpolations. An old funeral ceremony, known as "Dish-a-loof," illustrates the action of the players in "turning back their heads." During this ceremony the





# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

watchers at a funeral went out of the room (where the corpse was lying) and returned into it backwards.

In Shropshire (Madeley) this game of "Green Gravel" is always played with the game of "Wallflowers," as one game. This indicates the death of the players while maidens, consequently unmarried or betrothed girls. Miss Burne considers these two games were meant to go together. They may be part of one original game.

## MILKING PAILS

THIS version, both words and tune, was told me by a London nursemaid. It is almost identical with some variants collected for me in different parts of the country during the last two or three years, although many of these later collected versions show that the game is in a decaying stage. "Milk-pails," which were formerly pails of wood suspended from a yoke, carried on the milkmaid's shoulders, have in some versions become "milking cans" to suit present-day requirements. See versions from South Shields, Swaffham, and Cowes, given in my *Traditional Games*, pp. 385, 386. References are also given to the former use of the old box and truckle beds which are mentioned in the game. The origin of this game is probably to be attributed to purely country life, to the time when the possession of one or two beds was considered sufficient for the family; when outdoor washing and bleaching home-spun linen by the rivers and streams were in vogue, and when the summer shealings for cheese and butter annually took place.

# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

### THREE DUKES A-RIDING

THIS game was described to me by a Lancashire correspondent as "the oldest play of all." The version, words, and tune used in this book is from Madeley, Staffs., and was sent me by Miss Burne. All versions of this game point to the same origin and the incidents are the same—a party of young men seeking wives among the maidens of another village, the bargaining between both parties ending with each choosing a wife. There is no element of love-making: the courtship is not necessarily individual, but is apparently of the briefest description, and consists of mentioning the desire for a wife, the pretended indifference of the Dukes, and the retorts of the maidens, all of which are characteristic of old customs.

I have collected a number of versions of this game, which will be found in vol. ii. of *Traditional Games*. Some of these are very interesting in detail, such as the capture of one of the girls by the Dukes and taking her by force to their side. Another curious feature of this game is the line "Rancy tancy tay!" which runs through all. It is evidently a survival, in games, of the Slogans and war cries of chieftains and families so prevalent at one time in the northern and border counties. A Barnes version has "Ransom tansom terrimus hey!" and another, a Lancashire one, ends "Rancy tancy terry boys horn," which perhaps is indicative of horn-blowing. Probably there is nothing so old in any game as the custom apparently represented in this one of the girls marrying always into another village and of the bridegrooms appearing in parties to demand the hands of their brides.



# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

### OLD ROGER

THIS version of Old Roger, both words and tune, was collected by me from a Somersetshire (Bath) girl. The interest of the game is that it is not merely representative of a funeral, but more particularly shows the belief that a dead person is cognizant of actions done by the living, and capable of resenting personal wrongs and desecration of the grave; it also shows the sacredness of the grave. What, perhaps to us, is the most interesting feature, is the way in which the game is played. This clearly shows a survival of the method of portraying old plays. The ring of children act the part of "chorus," and relate the incidents of the play. The three actors say nothing, only act their several parts in dumb show. The raising and lowering of the arms on the part of the child who plays "apple tree," the quiet of "Old Roger" until he has to jump up, certainly shows the early method of actors when details were presented by action instead of words. Children see no absurdity in being a "tree" or a "wall," or an animal. They simply *are* these things if the game or play demands it, and consequently they think nothing of incongruities.

I do not, of course, suggest that children have preserved in this game an old play, but I consider that in this and similar games they have preserved traditional methods of acting and detail as shown in an early or childish period of the drama. All will remember how Shakespeare uses the same idea in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Different versions, collected from other places, and a fuller and more detailed comparison with early drama, will be given in vol. ii. of my *Traditional Games*.



# Singing Games

## NOTES

### WE ARE THE ROVERS

THIS version is, by kind permission of Miss Burne, taken from her *Shropshire Folklore*. I preferred to use this version, as it appears to be more perfect than others which have been collected by me. The tune was obtained from a Bath nurse some years ago. The words which accompanied this tune are almost identical with Miss Burne's, except that the two parties are called Roman and English soldiers, and two or three verses are missing which render the Shropshire game more complete. I have added to this the words "Present, shoot, bang, fire!!" which belong to the Bath game (probably a modern addition by children), as it adds to the zest and enjoyment of playing. Fighting, of course, follows in both. Several versions and further notes are given in my *Traditional Games*, vol. ii.

For the origin of this game, says Miss Burne, we must clearly go back to the old Border warfare. It is very evident that one side represents marauding invaders and the other the defending garrison. Ellesmere, whence we have this game, was during the Middle Ages the site of one of the castles of the Marches and the subject of many a claim and invasion on the part of the Welsh (*Shropshire Folklore*, p. 505). Other versions from the border counties and the north of England, where the same sort of thing prevailed for a long period between Scotch and English, prove the correctness of this supposition.

# Children's Singing Games

## NOTES

### POOR MARY SITS A-WEEPING

THIS very popular kissing game was, both words and tune, collected by me in Barnes, and was one of those played at the *Conversazione* of the Folklore Congress in 1891. The game is descriptive of a marriage with the elements of love and courtship by individual choice. It contains also the usual marriage formula which is significant of the marriage being agreed to and ratified in the presence of witnesses (the ring of children) or by a priest. Then, too, must be noticed the line, "Seven years after, son and daughter," which probably refers to the old notion, which still lingers, I believe, in some places, of the marriage being terminable after that period. "A year and a day," and "seven years," are the two most popular notions of the period necessary for lovers and betrothed couples to remain faithful to each other. An important fact is that in these and other kiss-in-the-ring games, the tune of the marriage formula is always the same. The peculiar interest of a game like this lies in the fact that it may contain relics of the actual marriage ceremony of our earliest ancestors before it was made an institution of the Church. Different versions and illustrations of the game are given in *Traditional Games*, vol. ii.

These notes do not exhaust the evidence to prove that children's games contribute to the knowledge of our past social and domestic history, but they indicate, I hope, some of the interest which attaches to an investigation of even nursery antiquities.



BALLANTYNE & HANSON  
BALLANTYNE PRESS  
LONDON AND EDINBURGH







